

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 03954 191118 Z

20

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

NEA-10 IO-12 ACDA-19 RSR-01 SAL-01 SAJ-01 MBFR-03

GAC-01 OMB-01 T-03 INRE-00 /142 W  
----- 089145

P R 191043 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3938

INFO AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

USDEL SALT

USMISSION BERLIN VIA POUCH

AMCONSUL BREMEN VIA POUCH

AMCONSUL DUESSELDORF VIA POUCH

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT VIA POUCH

AMCONSUL HAMBURG VIA POUCH

AMCONSUL MUNICH VIA POUCH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART VIA POUCH

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MBFR DEL; MPT DEL

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, GW

SUBJ: BRANDT THREATENS RESIGNATION: WEHNER ANNOUNCES  
NO REPEAT CANDIDACY FOR SPD VICE CHAIRMANSHIP

REF: BONN 3782

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1. SUMMARY: PUBLIC ATTENTION HAS BEEN EVEN MORE SHARPLY FOCUSED ON THE SPD NATIONAL CONGRESS AT HANNOVER, NOW LITTLE MORE THAN 20 DAYS AWAY, BY ANNOUNCEMENTS ON MARCH 16 THAT HERBERT WEHNER WILL NOT RUN AGAIN FOR A VICE CHAIRMANSHIP SLOT, AND ON MARCH 17, THAT CHANCELLOR WILLY BRANDT WOULD RESIGN AS PARTY CHAIRMAN IF THE CONGRESS WERE TO ADOPT PLANKS (996 MOTIONS ARE ON THE AGENDA) WHICH CONTRADICT THE SPD ELECTORAL PROGRAM ADOPTED LAST OCTOBER IN DORTMUND. BRANDT HAS THUS SERVED CLEAR PUBLIC NOTICE THAT HE INTENDS TO HAVE HIS WAY IN HANNOVER. END SUMMARY.

2. MARCH 16, SPD VICE CHAIRMAN WEHNER ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD NOT RUN AGAIN AT HANNOVER FOR THE VICE CHAIRMANSHIP. WEHNER, 66 AND AN SPD VICE CHAIRMAN SINCE 1958, SAID HE WAS MAKING THIS DECISION BECAUSE OF " PERSONAL REASONS". WEHNER MADE CLEAR THAT HE WOULD RETAIN THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE SPD PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AND THAT HE WOULD BE A CANDIDATE AT HANNOVER FOR A SEAT IN THE SPD NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. FOLLOWING WEHNER' S STATEMENT, THE SPD PRESIDIUM NOMINATED NORTHRHINE- WESTPHALIA MINISTER PRESIDENT HEINZ KUEHN FOR THE VICE CHAIRMANSHIP. IT HAS ALSO BECOME KNOWN THAT SPD TREASURER ALFRED NAU, 66, WILL DIVEST HIMSELF AT HANNOVER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR MEDIA POLICY. TWO POSSIBILITIES TO TAKE OVER THIS RESPONSIBILITY ARE HAMBURG INTERIOR SENATOR HEINZ RUHNAU AND BAVARIAN SPD VICE CHAIRMAN PETER GLOTZ ( SEE A-660 OF JULY 20).

3. ON MARCH 17, CHANCELLOR BRANDT TOLD THE SPD PARTY COUNCIL THAT HE WOULD RESIGN AS SPD CHAIRMAN IF THE SPD CONGRESS AT HANNOVER ADOPTED MOTIONS CONTRADICTING THE ELECTORAL PROGRAM ADOPTED AT DORTMUND IN OCTOBER 1973. BRANDT REPORTEDLY SHARPLY CRITICIZED EVERY SPD MEMBER WHO WANTS TO LEAD GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY ONTO A NEUTRALIST COURSE.

4. THE ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT PERSONNEL AND POLICY FROM SPD HEADQUARTERS PARALLELS PUBLICATION OF THE LATEST WICKERT INSTITUTE POLL WHICH SHOWS THAT THE SPD IS THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC' S MOST POPULAR POLITICAL PARTY. A SAMPLE OF 1800 WEST GERMANS ( EXCLUDING WEST BERLIN) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RECENTLY ANSWERED THE QUESTION: " WHICH PARTY AT THIS

MOMENT IS CLOSEST TO YOU?" WITH 47 PERCENT SAYING SPD,  
31 PERCENT CDU, 10 PERCENT FDP AND 4 PERCENT ALL OTHER PARTIES.  
EIGHT PERCENT GAVE NO ANSWER.

5. COMMENT: BRANDT' S CLEAR STATEMENT OF WHAT HE WILL  
NOT TOLERATE AT HANNOVER GAINS ADDITIONAL IMPORTANCE  
FOLLOWING AS IT DOES WEHNER' S ANNOUNCEMENT WHICH WAS  
CAUSED BY : (1) THE CONTINUING POOR STATE OF WEHNER' S  
HEALTH ( DIABETES) AND THAT OF HIS WIFE LOTTE ( ANGINA  
PECTORIS), AND (2) AS RUMORED IN BONN POLITICAL CIRCLES,  
WEHNER' S DISGUST AT FACTION BUILDING INSIDE THE SPD.  
BRANDT' S IMMEDIATE CHOICE OF KUEHN (61 AND ALSO IN  
POOR HEALTH) CLOSES OUT ANY CHANCE THAT THE SPD' S LEFT  
WING COULD NOMINATE ERHARD EPPLER. FURTHER, IT BINDS  
EVEN MORE CLOSELY KUEHN' S POWERFUL AND WORKER- RICH  
NRW ORGANIZATION TO BRANDT' S SIDE IN THE BATTLE AGAINST  
THE PARTY' S LEFT- WING INTELLECTUALS. KUEHN, ONE OF THE  
LEADING PROPONENTS OF SPD COOPERATION WITH THE FDP, AND  
AN ARCHITECT OF THE FORMATION OF THE BRANDT/ SCHEEL  
GOVERNMENT, CAN BE COUNTED ON TO FIGHT HARD AGAINST  
ANY SPD LEFT- WING PRESSURE TO DISASSOCIATE THE SPD  
FROM THE FDP.  
HILLENBRAND

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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